

Phil. 3: 13, 14; Gal. 4: 19; II Peter 1: 5-8; John 17: 19; I John 2: 6.

On giving, see Matt. 25: 14-27; Lev. 27: 30; I Cor. 9: 13, 14; I Cor. 16: 2; II Cor. 8: 12. Attention is called to the tract, "The Gospel of Giving," by the present writer.

5. *Consecrated Service.*—Putting all together we may expect the young people's movement to lead on from grace to grace, from power to power, in the path of service. In this critical period of the world, such a consecrated host is needed. We must keep in mind that our real work is not to parade but to serve. See John 15: 16; James 1: 27; Matt. 7: 21-23 and 25: 36-44; Luke 10: 36, 37; Rev. 22: 3, 4.

Questions for Discussion

1. What special work does the present condition of the world demand?
2. What is the best plan you know of Christian co-operation?
3. What mission has the society in the Brethren church?
4. Testify as to the good your society has done the community, the church, the S. S., the prayer-meeting, the home, you.
5. How can its efficiency be increased?
6. What are the perils that threaten it?
7. Close with consecration offering, prayers and testimonies.

NOTE.—There is a special rally song for Brethren K. C. and C. E. societies which is coming to be used also by others. You can get a roll of copies by sending a few stamps to the Pub. Co.

C. F. YODER.

The Sunday School

LESSON FOR JANUARY 30

BY THE EDITOR

How to Pray.—Matt. 6: 5-15

GOLDEN TEXT.—Pray to thy Father which is in secret.—Matt. 6: 6.

LESSON THOUGHT.—The greatest and sweetest blessings that come to us in this life are the results of secret communion with God.

Home Readings

How to pray, Matt. 6: 5-15.
Encouragement to prayer, Matt. 7: 7-12.
Believing prayer, James 1: 1-8.
True and false prayer, Luke 18: 9-14.
In Christ's name, John 16: 23-33.
A merciful God, Psalm 86: 1-10.
Abundant goodness, Psalm 145: 8-19.

Introductory Notes

This lesson is a continuation of the Sermon on the Mount. To get the connection between this and the last lesson you should read Matthew 5: 13 to 6: 4. Here Jesus explains the responsibility of Christians in that they are the salt of the earth and the light of the world. He also shows the relation of the Old Testament scriptures to the righteousness which must prevail in the kingdom of heaven. By various illustrations he shows that the religion which he taught is something that must begin in the heart, make the inner life pure and loving, and that this inner life of purity must express itself in words and deeds of love and kindness. In the lesson today Jesus teaches us how to pray. It will be found an interesting study to see what Jesus did on this all important subject, important to every believer. First of all Christ told the disciples how not to

pray, then how they should pray and lastly gave them a model prayer, one which tho brief, is very comprehensive, covering all human needs, with suitable petitions to God.

Meaning of the Text

5 *Not as the hypocrites.* They do not really pray, it is not from the heart, but from the lips only. *Standing.* The Jews usually stood to pray and sat to teach. It was not the posture our Lord condemned, but the ostentation. *Corners of the street.* In the broad open places of the city. Eighteen daily acts of devotion were prescribed by the rabbins, and wherever the worshiper chanced to be at the set time, he would go thro his worship. They prayed to be seen of men, and this the Lord condemns. *Their reward.* They have what they sought for, the praise of men, and that is all they get, for they did not expect an answer from God.

6, 7 *Thy closet.* Any secret place of prayer. The reference is to personal prayer and that should always be in secret, God does not condemn public prayer. He himself sought the mountains and hill tops for personal, private devotion. *Reward thee.* That is he will answer your prayer, give you what you ask for. The R. V. omits "openly;" the results of the reward will be open. *Vain repetitions.* For illustration see I Kings 18: 26, and Acts 19: 34. The Pharisees had fallen into the habit of going over and over phrases and forms of prayer. Repetition is not forbidden, but vain repetition. *Much speaking.* It is not quantity but quality that gives power to prayer.

8 *Father knoweth.* He knows our wants without repeating them to him so often. Why then ask at all? It cultivates the spirit of dependence on God, and it is thus that we express our faith in him.

9-13 Here the Lord gives us an example as to how we should pray. It is a model prayer. *Our Father.* We should approach God as children come to a true and loving father. *Heaven.* Suggests his greatness and glory. He is in heaven, but he is our Father, and as such he is near. *Hallowed.* Held in reverence, regarded as sacred. *Kingdom come.* That God's rule in the hearts of men may be extended. *Will be done.* That God's commandments may be obeyed. *As in heaven.* Where it is done perfectly by angels and redeemed spirits. *Daily bread.* Luke says, "Day by day." The prayer is for bread for one day only. Not for a year, but for a day. Thus we are to pray each day. *Forgive—debts.* Our sins are spoken of as debts to God. Failures in the duty which we owe him. *As we forgive.* Better "As we have forgiven," which implies that we have already forgiven others, before we ask God to forgive us. *Lead—not—temptation.* God never tempts any one to sin. When our place of duty exposes us to temptation, the prayer is to help us meet and endure the temptation. *Thine is the kingdom.* This whole clause to the end of the verse is omitted in the Revised Version. It is an ascription of praise to God.

14, 15 *If ye forgive.* This and the next verse are meant to teach that we can not consistently ask God to forgive us, if we do not forgive those who have wronged us. An unforgiving spirit is not compatible with the penitence that truly seeks forgiveness from God.

The Lesson Applied

1. *True Prayer.*—Here we have a lesson on what true prayer is. There is danger of our words becoming mere empty forms without any real earnest desires in them. True prayer puts the heart into every word that is uttered. We are not to pray to make people think we are very good or pious. That is a wrong motive; in fact we are not to pray to be heard. Our prayer is not to men but to God. He is in secret and the prayer offered in secret will be as verily heard as if offered in public, and very often do much more good. Public prayer is to be observed, but every child of God should have its place and time of secret prayer. The promise is that such shall have their reward.

2. *Our Father.*—In that beautiful prayer familiarly known as the "Lord's Prayer," the first words are, "Our Father." These are beautiful and comforting words. God is not only our creator, our king, our judge, but he is our Father also. That means that we are very near and dear to him, that he loves us, thinks upon us, cares for us, and delights to have us come to him and ask of him those things which we have need of. He is our Father, your Father and my Father. That means that we are brothers and belong to a common brotherhood. Of all the names given to our God none other is so sweet and comforting as the name Father. Thanks for the Fatherhood of God.

3. *Thy Kingdom Come.*—This part of the model prayer covers a great deal and means much. It is a prayer that the kingdom may come in all its fulness, that the principles of that kingdom may rule in the hearts of the people. With the coming of that kingdom God's will shall be done on earth as in heaven, and that means heaven on earth. This prayer should be made personal. Do not think that it is for your neighbor only. Let the prayer be answered in our own life. Hallow, that is, reverence his holy name, do his will, and let the kingdom rule in your heart and life.

4. *Our Needs.*—The model prayer sets forth very beautifully our needs and how God will supply them. We need food and raiment, we need forgiveness of our sins, we need guidance and deliverance, etc. All these we may have if we ask in faith to have them.

To Make You Think

1. Can you find in this lesson, How to pray, To whom to pray, For what to pray, and Why to pray?
2. What is the reward of those who pray to be seen of men?
3. Do people now pray to be seen and heard of men?
4. Can a hypocrite pray in secret?
5. Why is secret prayer so strongly enforced?